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THE
FAST-DAY:
A
POEM.

Price SIXPENCE.

THE
F. A. D. A. Y.



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M. E. O.

NO. 11111111

THE
FAST-DAY:

A

P O E M.

By THOMAS WILKINS.

JER. iv. 14. chap. viii. 6.

O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. Be thou instructed, lest my foul depart from thee, lest I make thy land desolate, a city not inhabited.

JOEL ii. 18.

Then will the LORD be jealous for his land and pity his people.

L O N D O N:

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M D C C C X X.

THE
F A S T - D A Y.

ETERNAL Sov'reign of the spacious sky
Attend our prayers, or our devotions die :
In vain to Thee we tune our votive lyre
Unless our theme, thy heav'nly grace inspire !
In dust and ashes see us lowly sit
Mourning for past offences at thy feet.
O ! were we all to build our hopes above,
Peace would be made—our quarrel sturn'd to love ;
If all our hearts were not by sin oppress'd,
Each might contented lay him down to rest.
But the Disease is found in all around,
All more or less do feel its deadly wound ;
But happy they who by experience know
The way of evil is the way to woe ;
Who fly for refuge to a Saviour's blood,
And trust the mercy of a pard'ning God.

Sin reign'd triumphant o'er the world's wide space
 Till cancell'd by the Covenant of Grace!
 Whose sov'reign balm does set us captives free,
 And gives us ever sweet access to Thee;
 Dispers'd the clouds of doubts and fears away;
 Behold the Gospel shines in open day!
 Souls that in bondage—slavish chains once wore,
 Partake the mercy, live and God adore;
 Happy on earth, while greater joys above
 Await their souls, when they from hence remove.
 In this our day, alas! the number's few,
 That do in virtue's golden paths pursue;
 Other enjoyments to their wills afford
 More pleasing prospects than their sov'reign Lord,
 Than those pursuits that yield men greatest gain;
 (Fools that they are) exchange for endless pain.

Ungrateful Man, most favour'd under heav'n!
 To whom peculiar grace and mercy's giv'n!
 Behold his judgments hov'ring o'er your head
 To strike your comforts and your blessings dead;
 Whose vengeful arm is a consuming fire,
 Whose injur'd laws strict justice does require.
 What vain inducement leads your souls astray,
 To tread the mazes of a devious way;
 To leave the peaceful path and heav'nly road,
 The path which led you to a pard'ning God?

You for whose sakes th' Almighty Son was poor,
 To seal your mercies, and your peace secure;
 To make you princes of the realms above,
 And crown your souls with heav'nly joy and love:
 Deigns to unveil the glories of his face,
 And makes you objects of his sov'reign grace:
 Communing with you in this mortal frame,
 Blessing all those who call upon his name:
 All that's created in the world's wide span
 Is for the service of the creature man;
 For us the sun in all its glory shines,
 For us the bounteous hand of Heav'n divines;
 Its varied seasons, all are for our good,
 To yield us pleasure, or afford us food.

The genial breezes of the cheerful SPRING
 Blow but to serve alike the slave and king;
 Here ev'ry morn a lovely scene we view,
 The tuneful birds their morn'g songs renew;
 The playful lamplings skip along the lawn,
 The op'ning flow'rs the neighb'ring fields adorn;
 The distant woods in varied greens appear,
 All nature does her golden liv'ries wear.

Then smiling SUMMER shews her lovely face,
 Shines on the corn, and ripens it apace;

Paints all the fruit that in the orchard grows,
 Exhales and strengthens ev'ry root that blows :
 When in the window peeps the dawn of day,
 The peasants rise to make the new mown hay ;
 Whose peaceful breasts are strange to many ills
 And fore diseases which the wealthy kills ;
 No cank'ring care disturbs their sweet repose,
 These 'tis who share the least of human woes ;
 Live in contentment with their scanty dearth,
 Their measur'd space allotted them on earth :
 And when old age encircles them around,
 If they in wisdom and in grace abound ;
 If unto God and man they liv'd upright,
 No care foreboding can their souls affright ;
 Some messag'd angel from the skies shall come
 And bear them safely to their heav'nly home.

AUTUMN yields plenty o'er our fruitful land,
 These are God's gifts and mercies of his hand ;
 Whose mildness to the husbandman bestows
 Some few fair weeks, in which his grain he sows ;
 Then bounteous Heav'n in abundance pours
 Rains which well water all our parching shores.

Nor is chill'd WINTER of inferior use
 It does to us a thousand gifts diffuse ;

Its

Its hoary frosts brace up the womb of earth,
 Till she is teeming with another birth.
 All things conspire to make us truly blest,
 To give us pleasure, or afford us rest.

Hail ! great JEHOVAH, Maker of the earth !
 Whose word alone creation spoke to birth ;
 Fram'd all the pillars of the vaulted sky,
 All things are seen by thy discerning eye !
 O what is man, the creature of a day,
 Whose longest life is as a glimm'ring ray ?
 Which e'er observ'd it quickly passes o'er,
 Dwindles to nothing, and is seen no more ?
 That Thou art mindful of such feeble dust,
 To leave thy throne to place him with the just ?
 Bore all the pangs that death and hell could lay
 Upon thy shoulders, to make plain the way
 For wretched sinners, to ascend the road
 Which leads to joy, to happiness and GOD.
 Grant we may hence from ev'ry sin be free,
 Renew our minds, and turn our thoughts on Thee !
 Set all the pleasures of thy ways in view,
 So we may in them ever hence pursue ;
 Shew us the transient empty side of things,
 The num'rous evils that vain folly brings ;

That we may serve thee all our days below,
And thus escape eternal death and woe!

How wretched he that to ill habit's giv'n,
That madly wanders from the ways of heav'n;
How'er the hand of fortune lends her aid,
How'er his lusts and pleasures are obey'd,
His fleeting moments of ungodly mirth,
Ere long will sink him to his native earth.
While at a distance sinful baits may please,
May seem delightful, and pursu'd with ease;
That joy awaits the vot'ries of the world,
That pain and sorrow from their minds are hurl'd;
Dance o'er the scene of life's tempestuous sea,
And, vessel-like, bear all their cares away;
Whole days and nights are lavish'd o'er the bowl,
Their giddy senses in delusions roll;
Their noblest powers abus'd by lust and wine,
They damn all laws, but mostly laws divine;
Blaspheme the God who gave them life and breath,
Profane his justice till they rush on death.

God sees our doings from his throne above,
We've tir'd his patience, and abus'd his love;
Detests our ways and visits with his rod
Our guilty earth, by plunging it in blood!

The noise of war is heard by all around,
 Its rumours doth from shore to shore resound :
 The hungry poor bewail their hapless fate,
 Are scorn'd and hunted from the rich's gate ;
 Tears do the truly pious cheeks bedew,
 That see thy awful judgments, LORD, in view ;
 Tears such as saints, as seraph angels shed,
 When on the cross the Saviour hung and bled !

Like Isr'el's sons, we've turn'd our face away
 From our Deliv'rer, and forgot to pray ;
 Serv'd idols which our rebel hearts have made,
 Thus we our calling and our God degrade ;
 Forfake the Guide who hath so safely led,
 Our trembling steps thro' ev'ry fear and dread ;
 Kept us secure from sudden death's alarms,
 Entwin'd us in the circle of his arms ;
 There was we happy, there divinely blest,
 Day gave us joy, and night did yield us rest !
 Soon as the dawn, the grey-eye morn appear'd,
 We wak'd in peace, JEHOVAH was our guard !
 When the fair sun put forth its golden ray,
 And gave new lustre to the face of day ;
 We early rose, and in soft notes of love
 Prais'd the kind mercies of our God above ;

That we may serve thee all our days below,
And thus escape eternal death and woe!

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 And gave new lustre to the face of day ;
 We early rose, and in soft notes of love
 Prais'd the kind mercies of our God above ;

To him our morning sacrifice we paid,
 Fulfill'd his word, and his commands obey'd !
 Then we were happy! nought disturb'd our mind,
 JESUS, our Guide was ever true and kind !
 The live-long day in right pursuits we spent,
 At night to rest we laid us down content.
 In all our dangers, he was e'er at hand,
 And led us safely o'er each foreign land ;
 Thro' barren wilds where savage beasts of prey
 Roam all the night and intercept the way,
 His heav'nly hand did lead us safe along,
 Kept us secure and sav'd us e'er from wrong !
 We in our Guardian did our joys repose,
 Whose friendly counsel bury'd all our woes,
 How blest were we when Him we did obey,
 New mercies crowned each succeeding day !
 When of our fruits we gave to him the first,
 Who was to us so gracious, good and just ;
 To do His service was our studious care
 Who in His bosom did our burdens bear !

The crying sins and evils of the day
 Call loudly for us all to Fast and Pray ;
 Bewail the mis'ries of our guilty land,
 To stay the justice of God's vengeful hand ;

See all our foes besetting us around,
 Distress our commerce, and our country wound;
 To blast the glories of *Britannia's* fame,
 Crush'd be their pride, abortive be their aim:
Britons arise! go bear your sails away,
 Just is your cause, nor fear to win the day!
 Protect her shores from ill designing foes,
 Foes that would plunge her in a thousand woes;
 Enslave us all in our own native land,
 And make us groan beneath a tyrant's hand.
 The cause is God's, for him you brave the field,
 May he appear to be your sword and shield;
 Attend you closely, warm each zealous breast,
 Crown you with glory, and secure your rest.

To what it is we all our evils owe
 Let us enquire—meet it is to know
 Whence come these tumults, why do wars increase,
 And stir up discord—wound the public peace?
 Tell me ye learn'd, ye critics of the day,
 Ye politicians, greater skill'd than they?
 Proceed these not from badness of the times.
 From crying sins, and blackness of our crimes?
 Is it not these that causeth all the dearth,
 That hurls down judgments on our lower earth?

Incenses Heav'n against our guilty land,
And arms with veng'ance its destroying hand ?

If we look round and view the scenes of life,
Well weigh men's actions, 'twill to us derive
Intrinsic knowledge of the world and things,
Give us an insight of their various springs ;
For want of this we into dangers run,
Embrace the evils which we ought to shun.
Mark but the men who are of low estate,
Whose vain ambition is to ape the great ;
Strain ev'ry point to keep their grandeur on
Till they and theirs for ever are undone.
How vast the number of those silly elves
Ruin their fam'lies and destroy themselves,
By following after pleasures of the day,
Waste all their substance, 'running to decay.

The high and mighty pleasure's paths pursue,
Many their vices, but their virtues few ;
Their wealth to vilest purposes they use,
Thus blast their honour, and their pow'r abuse ;
They who should set examples for mankind,
Adopt such precepts which improve the mind,
Walk in the paths of a dangerous road,
Are perfect strangers to their Saviour-God ;

Spend and are spent in doing works of ill,
 Break all his laws, and countermand his will:
 Tho' they from him receive their nobler birth
 By him distinguish'd from the poor on earth,
 They live neglectful of his glorious name,
 Save only when they use it to profane—

Some few revive who are of high descent
 Whose minds on God and piety are bent;
 Pursue the path of fair religion's ways,
 Devote their lives unto their Maker's praise;
 Scorn the delights the flatt'ring world can give,
 And for His sake its sweetest pleasures leave:
 Forake the evils of the present day,
 From its delusions turn their face away:
 Take up the cross, the Saviour's image wear,
 To do his will is their peculiar care:
 Employ themselves in doing acts of good,
 Clothing the poor, assisting them with food,
 Live as become the princes of the sky,
 To earth and all its sensual pleasures die:
 Till they are free'd from this inferior clod,
 To live in heav'n with their incarnate God.

: Thousands there be religion's cause embrace,
 But few the number that religion grace;

Prove by their actions they are sons of God,
 Are dead to sin and wash'd in Jesu's blood :
 Put on religion's sanctimonious dress,
 And to the world appear what they profess ;
 Deceive mankind by artifice and lies,
 With looks dejected and uplifted eyes—
 To careless strangers seem like faints of light,
 While those who know them, know them black
 as night :

Tho' on religion they appear to smile,
 Their thoughts are evil, and their actions vile.
 Its holy garb by ev'ry age is wore
 To effect some purpose which had fail'd before.
 Thus oft the truly pious are ensnar'd
 When they the words of hypocrites regard,
 " If they are Christians, surely they are just,
 " I do God-service while his friends I trust ;
 " He does like me upon His grace rely,
 " And should, if able, all his wants supply."
 Many are they who thus have been deceiv'd
 By such delusions, and a knave reliev'd.
 Others keep up their credit by their walk,
 Whose whole religion's center'd in their talk :
 No other motive save the love of gain
 Makes their speech favor of this lovely strain :

To

To saving faith they still are strangers quite,
 And held detested in their Maker's sight.
 Deluded souls ! you know not what you do,
 While you in such pernicious paths pursue :
 A little time you may deceive mankind,
 May make your fellows to your frailties blind :
 But know there lives a Judge in heav'n above,
 That all your doings shortly will reprove ;
 Search ev'ry thought and tell each secret there,
 And bind your souls in darkness and despair.

Religion's vot'ries should from sin be pure,
 And for the cross a thousand ills endure ;
 What for its sake may give them tort'ring pain
 Souls truly good should count their greatest gain;
 Smile when disease afflict their feeble frame,
 In ev'ry trouble bless their Saviour's name ;
 In ev'ry danger on his grace rely,
 Resign'd to him, content to live or die.
 Nor persecution should distress the soul,
 Nor fear his praise to sound from pole to pole ;
 Repeat his heav'nly mercies o'er and o'er,
 Thro' ev'ry land, to the remotest shore :
 To barb'rous nations there the wonders tell,
 Of Jesu's love that saves lost souls from hell !

Teach the wild *Indian* in his native wood,
 To know and serve the great Creator God ;
 That their blind souls his Gospel may embrace,
 And be partakers of his saving Grace !

Then would the LORD stop his avenging hand,
 Pity his people, save our guilty land—
 Avert our evils, heal our num'rous woes,
 And turn the sword of justice on our foes ;
 Shield us from harm beneath his guardian care,
 And on his shoulders all our burdens bear.
Zion would lift up her declining head,
 And peace repose her on her downy bed :
 Wars' dreadful weapons e'er be laid aside,
 Their edge no more with human blood be dy'd ;
 He'll throw a veil o'er all our follies past,
 Secure our peace and save our souls at last !

Sin appears hateful ev'ry where, and place,
 But still more noxious when it feigneth grace ;
 The tongue may falter, and the bosom sigh
 For seeming sin, and give the heart the lie ;
 Deplore the crying evils of the day,
 While there are none pursue them more than they.
 'Tis not the dye which stamps the mettle good,
 Nor scales by which the value's understood ;

These may deceive the most discerning eye,
 Till we the virtue of the mettle try.
 So 'tis with those which often do pretend
 To love religion, and be virtue's friend;
 And on the credit of so good pretence,
 Are to them both a scourge and an offence;
 Deceive themselves and all the world beside,
 But from their God no ill devise can hide;
 He notes each action, sets down all their ways,
 And in due time their sum of ills repays.

O that the sons of men in time were wise!
 Would turn their face from vanity and lies;
 Cleave unto God, no more his ways forsake,
 Obey his voice, nor his commandments break;
 Follow his footsteps, and his word observe,
 Think it a pleasure such a God to serve,
 Whose tender love such acts of pity shews;
 The vile to pardon never does refuse;
 Binds up the wounds of ev'ry broken heart,
 And frees the guilty if from sin they part.

Yet can we think these blessings to receive
 While we by sin God's holy Spirit grieve?
 While we pursue the ways that are unjust,
 All all our doings will be held accurst;

While our devises are to hurt mankind ;
 While our ill counsels are to blood inclin'd :
 While we lust after riches not our own,
 And cause the guiltless in our chains to groan ;
 Strive to enslave a land as free as this,
 Lay waste their country and destroy their peace;
 Where rich and poor did follow each their joy,
 And no stern law could e'er their sweets annoy :
 Both sat secure beneath their peaceful vine,
 To eat their bread and drink their cheerful wine.

If we desire to make our peace with God,
 Or 'scape the judgments of his threat'ning rod,
 Withdraw our troops—end our domestic woes,
 And turn the sword upon our common foes ;
 Mercy laments, weeps o'er the horrid deed
 To see the fair, the spotless infant bleed
 Who know no guile, whose innocence demands
 Mercy and kindness from the vilest hands :
 Hard is the heart that feels not pity here,
 To guard the helpless, save their lives from fear ;
 Who would not ward off ev'ry fatal blow,
 Some kind compassion on their age bestow.
 Save them from death, nor let their souls expire,
 In burning flames of sad devouring fire :

Dreadful indeed must be the horrid sight
 Of towns in flames, consuming too by night;
 Women and children's voices pierce the air,
 In vain they plead, in vain they cry, "Forbear!"
 No husband near them to afford his aid,
 He in the field a breathless corse is laid.
 Methinks I see the helpless orphans stand
 Friendless, and no deliverer at hand,
 Aside their parents fallen to the ground,
 Their weeping souls with floods of sorrow drown'd;
 Unus'd to hardships, sink beneath their grief,
 Into death's arms they fly for kind relief.

Kind Heav'n divert us from such evil crimes,
 That e'er will blot the glory of our times;
 By hated foes scorn'd and detested be,
 And what is worse, deserted, LORD, by thee!
 O what a state, a wretched state we're in,
 Estrang'd to thee, and abject slaves to sin;
 Madly pursue as long as we have breath
 The paths which lead us to eternal death:
 Think we that GOD will pass our follies o'er—
 If we still sin till we can sin no more?
 Till hoary age shall give us silver hairs
 Our lives deprest beneath the weight of years?

We live indeed as tho' we ne'er should die,
 And on this world our greatest hopes rely;
 To things eternal pay the least regard,
 Yet think it ill to be by heav'n debarr'd:
 What right or title can our wishes claim,
 To those enjoyments which was ne'er their aim;
 Which from our thoughts were the most remote,
 We to our pleasures do our hours devote;
 To acts of piety are strangers quite,
 Nor are its precepts ever our delight.
 Look round and see among the human race,
 How few enjoy the mercies of free grace;
 Yet to the church on ev'ry sabbath-day
 They may repair, to hear, and sing, and pray;
 Swear not at all, and pay each man his due;
 Think they do ev'ry evil way eschew;
 Have saving grace to bear their souls away
 When death shall call them, to eternal day,
 To live with CHRIST at his right hand in heav'n,
 And firmly trust that all their sins' forgiv'n

Deluded Souls! beware of this mistake,
 In time from this lethargic dream awake!
 Know then, unless you're blest'd with pard'ning
 grace,
 You ne'er can see the dear Redeemer's face;

Never enjoy the mercies of his love,
 Can never with him be enthron'd above;
 Never to him in hallelujahs sing,
 Nor hail him your incarnate God and King!
 As the rash youth delights in lust and wine,
 So you must glory in delights divine;
 Follow your God as he's pursuing ill,
 And be obedient to his heav'nly will;
 Die to the world and all its pleasures too,
 In all your thoughts e'er keep your God in view.

This the religion which will bless mankind!
 Afford true joy, and animate the mind!
 Refresh the soul when other means decay,
 And make old age as sweet as smiling May!
 Revive the spirits all our journey thro'
 With grace divine, and mercies ever new:
 God will appear our joyful souls to save
 When we are dropping to the silent grave;
 Raise up our spirits to his throne above,
 And crown us with his never dying love!

These are pursuits most worthy of our care,
 These to enjoy no pain or cost let's spare;
 Relinquish the world and all its pois'nous baits,
 Think on the joys which on religion waits!

They may be hid, o'erclouded for a time,
 But shall ere long in brightest glory shine !
 Bear persecution with a godlike mind,
 And prove more noble, like pure gold refin'd !
 Tho' all the pow'rs of hell obstruct the way,
 Thro' God our Saviour we shall win the day.

O may our joys be center'd all in Thee
 Thou most ador'd, incarnate Deity !
 Hail ! Son of God, thy Father's best belov'd,
 Thy works by men and angels are approv'd !
 In all thy doings love is mingled there,
 Thy mercy ever drives away despair ;
 Binds up the wounds and cheers the broken heart,
 Stops the disease, and heals each bruised part ;
 Presents us faultless to the throne of God,
 Wash'd and renewed in thy pard'ning blood.

Come then, ye sinners, to this balm divine,
 Come, pay your homage to this heav'nly shrine !
 Bow at his footstool, plead his pard'ning grace,
 And He'll unveil the beauties of his face :
 Forfake the paths that stain your souls with vice,
 Embrace religion and be truly wise :
 Sweet are her windings, peaceful is her way,
 And happy are they who her laws obey !

